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A new race of *Aplonis panayensis* (Scopoli) based on eye colour

by HUMAYUN ABDULALI

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When Hume in 1873 (*Stray Feathers*, 1: 480) described the Andaman race of the Glossy Stare, now known as *Aplonis panayensis tytleri*, he referred to great variations in the colour of the irides in the 60 specimens which he had obtained from almost every island in both the Andamans and the Nicobars. The colour of the irides in adults, he said, varied "from white, opalescent white, fleshy white, and pale pink to brown, deep red-brown, and deep orange." He implied that these were indiscriminately mixed-up, but according to Richmond (1903 *Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus.* 25)

Abbot & Kloss found that the birds from Car Nicobar had brown irides, while all from the central Nicobars and from the Great and Little Nicobar had white ones. I have referred to this in my paper on the birds of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (*J. Bom. nat. Hist. Soc.* 61: 552) but was then unable to offer any comments. I visited the Nicobars again this year and 19 specimens obtained in Great and Central Nicobar had their irides white, while six from Car Nicobar had them brown. Many others in all these places and around Port Blair were observed through binoculars and the difference in eye colour was confirmed.

I have been unable to link this with any difference in any other character, though there is a slight downward cline in size of wing and bill as one proceeds southwards.

In several instances, birds in immature plumage and of both sexes were shot from the same flock and they all had their irides of the same colour as the adults.

Under the circumstances, there can be little doubt that the Glossy Stare from the Andamans (which is the type locality of *tytleri*) and from Car Nicobar can be separated from those from the Nicobar Islands further south by the former having their irides brown and the latter white.

I therefore name the birds from Kamorta, Trinkut, Nankauri and Great Nicobar

Aplonis panayensis albiris subsp. nov.

Type: No. 22410 in the Bombay Natural History Society's collection. Collected by Humayun Abdulali at Campbell Bay, Great Nicobar, 1st March, 1966.

Co-types: Nos. 22408, 22409 and 22411-22426, 11 males and 7 females collected in the Central Nicobars (10) and in Great Nicobar (8).

As implied earlier, I have little doubt that this form occurs over all the other islands in the Nicobars south of Car Nicobar, but since racial differences have arisen in this species on adjacent islands, the identity of birds from Nicobar islands other than those mentioned by me may be determined by future observers.

Nest and eggs of *Buccanodon anchietae*

by ROBERT B. PAYNE

Received 15th November, 1966

The Yellow-headed Barbet, *Buccanodon anchietae* Bocage, is a little-known bird of open woodland in central Africa. No nest or eggs of the species appear to have been described, although Benson and White (1957: 160) list an unpublished record of five young in a nest in northern Zambia. On 23rd September 1966 a nest was found at Lukolwe Mission in north-western Zambia (13° 10' S, 22° 49' E). A pair of the barbets perched near a nest hole 18 feet high in a dead tree. Only one visit to the hole was made by a barbet in five hours of observation. The birds spent their time perched lethargically on limbs. Most of the time the two were together, and when one left the other remained until it returned. Courtship feeding with the transfer of unidentified food was seen once, and as in